



A CONSUMER CONTROLLED COUNCIL COMMITTED TO  
ENSURING QUALITY REHABILITATION SERVICES

REPORT OF THE NEBRASKA

State Rehabilitation Council

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**CONTACT INFORMATION:**

The State Rehabilitation Council (SRC) values the input and involvement of all citizens in Nebraska regarding rehabilitation services. All SRC meetings are open to the public and are a great opportunity for the public to voice concerns and opinions.

**MEETINGS:**

Meeting dates, times and locations are posted on the Nebraska VR web site at [vr.nebraska.gov](http://vr.nebraska.gov)

**WRITE:**

State Rehabilitation Council Chairperson  
Nebraska Department of Education  
301 Centennial Mall South  
P.O. Box 94987  
Lincoln, NE 68509

**CALL:**

402.679.6298  
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402.471.0788

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## State Rehabilitation Council

Nebraska Department of Education

October 1, 2014

To the Citizens of the State of Nebraska:

On behalf of the Nebraska State Rehabilitation Council (SRC), I am pleased to present the 2013-2014 Annual Report. This report reflects the efforts of the partnership between State Rehabilitation Council members and Nebraska VR (VR) to offer quality services and advocate for Nebraska's individuals with disabilities.

During this past year, SRC members heard reports & Legislative updates from the Director of VR. Reports were also shared from the Client Assistance Program Director, as well as reports from the Statewide Independent Living Council, Assistive Technology Partnership and the NE Youth Leadership Council.

Other actions supported by the SRC:

- This year was the sixth year the SRC hosted a Senator Luncheon at the State Capitol. It provided an opportunity to share information about VR with the Senators attending.
- Added new members to the SRC to promote more committee involvement.
- The council supported the 30 day client contact standard recommending this standard be added to the case review checklist including documented exceptions of client needs.
- The SRC targeted outreach with the Latino population as well as the Deaf and Hard of Hearing.
- The SRC unanimously supported the FedEx Days Talent Bank Project as it was presented and strongly supports its implementation.

This year was a time for growth and change. It could not have been successful without the collaboration, advocacy, and support from the dedicated members of the SRC & VR Staff. As the chair of the SRC, I would like to recognize the work of the SRC and the commitment the members have in working to ensure Nebraskans with disabilities have access to quality employment opportunities.

*Kipp Ransom*

Kipp Ransom, Chairperson  
Nebraska State Rehabilitation Council

# SRC Committees and Accomplishments



Barb Benes—Waverly

Barb completed her sixth year as a member of the SRC. She served on the Employer Services Committee.



Sharon Bloechle—Omaha

Sharon is the parent of an adult son with disabilities and is a member of Learning Disabilities Association of Nebraska. She served on the Client Services Committee.



Robert Danner—David City

Robert is a small business owner who received services from Nebraska VR. Robert served on the Transition Services Committee.



Jaime Galloway—Lincoln

Jaime is a former Nebraska VR consumer and the parent and grandparent of children who experience a disability. He served on the Client Services Committee.



Rita Hammitt—Omaha

Rita works in the Special Populations Office of the Nebraska Department of Education. She served on the Transition Services Committee.

## Client Services Committee

**Members:** Sharon Bloechle, Jaime Galloway, Tim Kolb, Brad Meurrens, Leslie Novacek, Kipp Ransom, Vicki Rasmussen, Joni Thomas (Chair).

Angela Fujan, Nebraska VR Advisor.

During the past year, information from the previous year's focus groups with the Latino and the Deaf and Hard of Hearing populations was used to develop and begin outreach to these State Plan identified underserved populations. Members recommended the Latino and the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Committees be developed to build relationships in these communities.

The committee stressed the importance of using surveys to gauge how Nebraska VR is meeting client needs. Therefore, client satisfaction survey results were reviewed by members and a revised survey will be utilized in the next year to get more specific information.



Joni Thomas—Lincoln

## Client Services Committee Chairperson — Joni Thomas

Joni is the Executive Director of the Center for Independent Living of Central Nebraska.

## Employer Services Committee

**Members:** Barb Benes, April Isaacs (Chair), Vicki Newman, Mark Schultz.

Jim Coyle, Nebraska VR Advisor.

The Employment Services Committee goals were to increase employer input on hiring and employment retention, review VR trends and State Plan revisions, and outreach to additional State Senators.

Council members extended an invitation to the State Senator representing the Council member's district for the SRC's annual Senators luncheon.

The committee recommended the following to Nebraska VR:

- Survey employer input group several times a year for expertise in hiring and employment.
- Approval of Nebraska VR's assessment of trends and State Plan goals.
- Continue soft skill training.
- Partner with employers to prepare clients with skills important for their field.
- Continue the SRC's Entrepreneur of Distinction Award and the Entrepreneur of Distinction Alumni Award.



April Isaacs—Lincoln

#### Employer Services Committee Chairperson — April Isaacs

April is the Human Resource Business Partner and Recruitment Specialist with Saint Elizabeth Regional Medical Center.

### Transition Services Committee

Members: Robert Danner, Gayle Hahn (Chair), Rita Hammitt, Sherri Kelley, Seamus Kelly.

Mark Mason, Nebraska VR Advisor.

The Transition Committee goals were to improve ways to inform parents, students, educators, and partners about Nebraska VR services.

The Committee provided input on the following topics:

- Preparation for pre-employment services as defined in the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA).
- Improved organization for jobs driven training strategy implementation for initiatives like Project SEARCH.
- Greater communication with schools facilitated by VR school counselor contact list for each school.



Gayle Hahn—Hastings

#### Transition Services Committee Chairperson — Gayle Hahn

Gayle is the Community Work Incentive Coordinator at Easter Seals Nebraska.



Sherri Kelley—Omaha

Sherri works for PTI Nebraska (Parent Training and Information for Families of Children with Disabilities). She served on the Transition Services Committee.



Seamus Kelly—Omaha

Seamus represented PTI Nebraska (Parent Training and Information for Families of Children with Disabilities). He was a member of the Transition Services Committee.



Tim Kolb—Franklin

Tim was born with a rare form of Muscular Dystrophy known as Werdnig-Hoffman Syndrome. He is a long time activist on disability issues. Tim served on the SRC's Client Services Committee.



Brad Meurrens—Lincoln

Brad is a member of the Nebraska Independent Living Council. He was on the Client Services Committee.



Vicki Newman — Lincoln

Vicki was a VR client and is a small business owner. She served on the Employer Services Committee.

# Nebraska VR Funding



Leslie Novacek—Lincoln

Leslie is the Director of the Assistive Technology Partnership. She served on the Client Services Committee.



Kipp Ransom—Lincoln

Kipp is the Lead Counselor on the Spinal Cord Injury Unit at Madonna Rehabilitation Hospital. He served as SRC Chairperson and on the Client Services Committee.



Vicki Rasmussen—Lincoln

Vicki is the Director of the Nebraska Client Assistance Program (CAP). She was a member of the Client Services Committee.



Mark Schultz—Lincoln

Mark is the Director of Nebraska VR and a required member of the SRC. He served on the Employer Services Committee.



J.D. Simmons—Doniphan

J.D. is an Employment Specialist in the Grand Island office of Nebraska VR. He served on the Transition Services Committee.

Every \$1.00 appropriated to Nebraska VR from the State of Nebraska earns \$3.69 in Federal Funding for services to Nebraskans with disabilities.



## Return on Investment for the Nebraska VR Program

Average Cost of Nebraska VR Services per Person:	\$ 9,386
Average Annual Earnings after Nebraska VR Services:	\$18,270
Estimated Annual Taxes on Earnings:	
Federal Income Tax	\$ 1,818
State Income Tax	\$ 384
State/Local Sales Tax	\$ 311
Social Security Tax	\$ 2,849
Average Total Taxes per Year	\$ 5,361
Average Return to Taxpayers over 30 Remaining Years of Employment	\$160,841

On average, a successfully employed person returns \$17.14 to the taxpayers for every \$1 spent through Nebraska VR services.

# Message from the Nebraska VR Director



During the last year our conversation seems to have been dominated by discussion of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act. While changes such as the required provision of pre-employment transition

services and a greater emphasis on services to businesses were anticipated, many details are still being worked out as rules and regulations are drafted. It is critical we have our partners at the table as we anticipate the changes and explore how to effectively respond. One of the ways this occurs is through the involvement of our partners on the State Rehabilitation Council (SRC). The input of employers, individuals with disabilities, service providers, and other members of the SRC inform the decisions of the agency on policy, process and practice.

The SRC has been actively engaged in planning for the implementation of the new law and the potential opportunities for improving our services to consumers and businesses. We are fortunate to have a common goal of “let’s do what’s in the best interest of the individuals we serve.” But even more so, the support of the SRC for putting into place innovative strategies and solutions to the issues we face is leading us to a model of services that will be more engaging and responsive to all our customers.

This journey is just beginning and much uncertainty lies ahead. Together we will look for the opportunities within the unknown, and while we may not always succeed, we take the risk to change because we know we must as we strive to do our best.

*Mark Schultz, Director*

*Nebraska VR*

# Annual Program Costs

	Cost of Program
<b>Administration</b>	<b>\$2,643,761</b>

## CLIENT SERVICES

	Cost of Program
Provided by VR Staff	\$ 11,480,229
Purchased from Community Rehab Programs	\$ 1,445,607
Purchased from Other Vendors	\$5,977,095
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 18,902,931</b>

## PURCHASED FOR CLIENTS

	Cost of Program
Assessment	\$ 784,465
Diagnosis & Treatment of Impairments	\$ 68,711
Four-Year College or University Training	\$ 805,647
Junior or Community College Training	\$ 673,229
On-the-Job Training	\$ 117,065
Basic Academic Remedial or Literacy Training	\$ 2,217
Job Readiness Training	\$5,070
Miscellaneous Training	\$ 307,354
On-the-Job Supports-Time Limited	\$375,485
On-the-Job Supports-Supported Emp	\$1,657,220
Transportation	\$ 322,866
Maintenance	\$ 192,901
Rehabilitation Technology	\$ 1,422,065
Reader	\$ 4,760
Interpreter	\$ 35,389
Technical Assistance	\$ 121,637
Benefits Counseling	\$ 183,416
All Other Services	\$343,206
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$7,422,702</b>

# Nebraskans Served by Nebraska VR

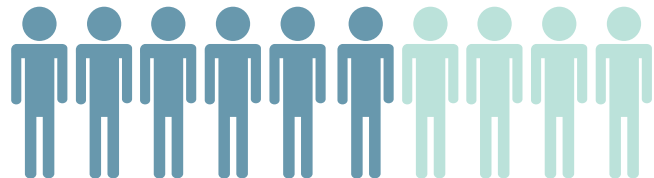
## CONSUMERS SERVED BY COUNTY

County	Total	County	Total
Adams.....	217	Johnson .....	6
Antelope.....	25	Kearney.....	31
Arthur.....	0	Keith .....	22
Banner .....	1	Keya Paha .....	0
Blaine.....	2	Kimball .....	8
Boone .....	30	Knox .....	19
Box Butte.....	16	Lancaster .....	1395
Boyd .....	5	Lincoln .....	294
Brown .....	13	Logan.....	2
Buffalo .....	262	Loup .....	3
Burt.....	13	Madison.....	353
Butler .....	49	McPherson.....	2
Cass .....	31	Merrick.....	33
Cedar .....	22	Morrill .....	18
Chase.....	1	Nance.....	19
Cherry .....	2	Nemaha .....	14
Cheyenne.....	35	Nuckolls.....	13
Clay.....	26	Otoe.....	45
Colfax.....	23	Pawnee .....	10
Cuming .....	25	Perkins.....	4
Custer .....	55	Phelps.....	10
Dakota .....	55	Pierce.....	27
Dawes.....	22	Platte .....	257
Dawson.....	137	Polk .....	30
Deuel .....	7	Red Willow .....	38
Dixon .....	22	Richardson.....	29
Dodge .....	154	Rock.....	3
Douglas .....	1276	Saline.....	50
Dundy .....	0	Sarpy .....	226
Fillmore.....	29	Saunders .....	72
Franklin.....	5	Scotts Bluff.....	195
Frontier .....	11	Seward.....	57
Furnas.....	11	Sheridan .....	7
Gage .....	81	Sherman .....	8
Garden .....	2	Sioux.....	0
Garfield.....	19	Stanton.....	21
Gosper .....	17	Thayer.....	15
Grant .....	1	Thomas.....	2
Greeley.....	8	Thurston .....	44
Hall .....	311	Valley .....	16
Hamilton.....	18	Washington .....	38
Harlan .....	3	Wayne.....	35
Hayes.....	1	Webster .....	15
Hitchcock.....	8	Wheeler .....	4
Holt.....	56	York .....	93
Hooker.....	2	Out of state.....	50
Howard .....	16		
Jefferson .....	31		
		<b>Total Served</b>	<b>6789</b>

## 2014 NEBRASKA VR EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM

Applied for Services	5,558
Received Services	6,789
Successfully Employed	2,014

## SUCCESSFULLY EMPLOYED NEBRASKA VR CLIENTS



**58%** of clients are employed full-time.

Average wage for 2014 is **\$10.83**

## 2014 OCCUPATION & EARNINGS FOR COMPETITIVELY EMPLOYED CONSUMERS

Occupations	Percent	Average Hourly Earnings
Service	29.4%	\$8.73
Office Support	13.4%	\$10.77
Professional	16.6%	\$13.60
Sales	11.9%	\$9.16
Transportation & Material Moving	7.6%	\$10.83
Production	8.6%	\$10.91
Installation, Maintenance, & Repairs	4.0%	\$11.99
Management, Business, & Finance	2.1%	\$14.98
Construction & Extraction	4.2%	\$12.31
Farming, Fishing, & Forestry	2.2%	\$11.37

# Partnerships with Employers & Nebraska VR

## SOME OF THE COMPANIES WORKING WITH NEBRASKA VR

### AGRICULTURE

Cargill  
T&L Irrigation

### AIRCRAFT SERVICES

Prime Flights

### BANKING/INSURANCE

First National Bank  
Mutual of Omaha

### CAR MAINTENANCE SERVICES

Anderson Auto\*  
Firestone\*  
Graham Tire\*  
Husker Auto Group\*  
Jensen Tire & Auto\*  
Jiffy Lube\*  
Kia Motors\*  
Pittman\*  
Sears Auto\*  
Southeast Community College\*  
Tires Plus\*  
TO Haas\*  
Walker Tire & Auto\*  
Woodhouse Auto

### CLEANING SERVICES

ABM  
The Maids

### DISTRIBUTION

Amcon Distributing Co.  
Walmart Distribution Center+

### FOOD PROCESSING

ADM  
Farmland Foods/Cooks Ham  
Hormel  
Food Stores

CJ Foods  
Gary's Super Foods  
Hy-Vee  
Russ's Market  
Safeway  
Super Saver

### HOTELS

Days Inn & Suites  
Embassy Suites+

### HUMAN SERVICES

Good Neighbor Center  
Goodwill Ind. of Greater NE, Inc.  
Habitat for Humanity  
Simon House

YMCA

YWCA

### HVAC

A-1 United\*  
Frazier Company\*  
Fred's Heating & Air\*  
Johnstone Supply\*  
SOS Heating & Air\*  
Standard Heating and Air\*

### INFORMATION SERVICES

InfoUSA (now Infogroup)  
Lincoln Journal Star  
PayPal

### MANUFACTURING

Behlen Mfg. Co.  
Columbus Hydraulics  
Lindsay Manufacturing Co.

### MANUFACTURING/WELDING

Agri-Products\*  
Case New Holland CNH\*

Chief Industries, Inc.\*  
Cyclonaire\*  
Filter Specialist Inc\*  
IES Commercial Inc\*  
Klute Inc. Steel Fabrication\*  
Messersmith Electric\*  
Metal-Tech\*  
MFS/York/Stormor\*  
Standard Iron\*  
Valmont Industries+

### MEDICAL/HEALTH CARE

Access\*  
Central District Health Dept.  
CHC/Champs\*  
Columbus Community Hospital+  
Faith Regional Health Services+  
Good Samaritan Hospital\*+  
Heartland\*  
Home Instead Senior Care  
Madonna Rehabilitation Hospital  
Mary Lanning Hospital\*+  
Mercy Medical Center+  
Mid-Plains Power\*  
Middleton\*  
Regional West Medical Center  
St. Elizabeth-CHI Health+  
St. Francis Medical Center\*+  
York General Health Care+

### PHARMACEUTICALS

Novartis  
Pharmaceutical Technologies, Inc.  
West Pharmaceuticals

### RESTUARANTS/FOOD SERVICE

Catfish Corner  
Dickey's Barbecue Pit

Five Guys Burgers & Fries  
Irv's Deli  
Lincoln Highway Diner  
McDonalds  
Panera Bread  
Pizza Hut  
Popeyes  
Quaker Steak & Lube  
Sodexo  
Taco Johns  
Treat America Food Services

### RETAIL

Best Buy  
Bosselman's Travel Center  
Cabela's Inc.  
Gordmans  
Home Depot  
Home Goods  
Kmart  
Lowe's  
Marshalls  
Menards  
Oriental Trading Company  
Orscheln  
Petco  
Staples  
Travel Center of America  
Target  
TJ Maxx  
Walgreens  
Walmart Stores  
TRANSPORTATION  
Rail Crew Xpress

\* Certificate Program Partner

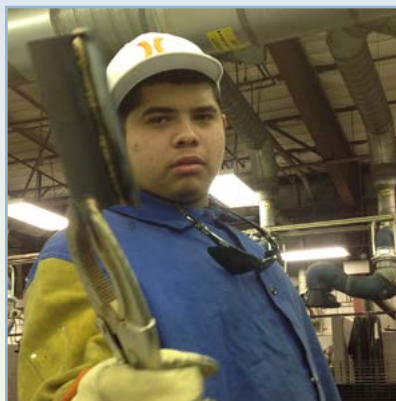
+ Project SEARCH Site Host

## THE VALUE OF PARTNERSHIPS

Each year in the spirit of doing what is in the best interest of the individuals served, successfully employed clients are asked to complete a Client Satisfaction Survey. Respondents were asked to identify which Nebraska VR provided services were most helpful.

Nearly **40%** of clients reported Employment Services as valuable. These services include working with employers on behalf of individuals with disabilities, underscoring the value of business partnerships.

# Nebraska VR Successful People



LUPE VALLE

Growing up in Texas with little formal education, Lupe had no sign language skills and few reading and math skills when he moved to Nebraska at age 15.

As the only deaf person enrolled at Kimball High School, Lupe benefited from a community of support of which Nebraska VR has been at the center.

Services Nebraska VR provided for Lupe to be successful were career planning and evaluation in high school; financial assistance for college; an iPad and other devices for communication and independent living coordinated with the Assistive Technology Partnership; and on-the-job training and placement services.

After graduating with a Certificate in Welding and completing an on-the-job training, Lupe was hired as a welder at Scottsbluff Industries. Lupe has certainly proven that with determination and a community of support, there are many possibilities!



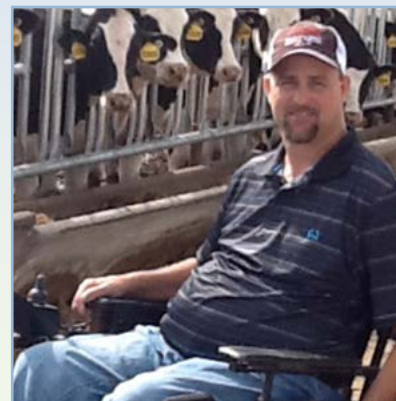
KATIE HEARN

Katie Hearn is an excellent example of someone who doesn't give up. Diagnosed with Asperger Syndrome, Katie has worked with Nebraska VR since high school and learned strategies to help her in work situations.

After receiving an Associates of Applied Science and Visual Publications from Southeast Community College, she has explored a variety of career options.

Her Nebraska VR counselor reports Katie is building her confidence and resumé. Some of her work experiences include an on-the-job training with Nebraska VR's marketing team and temporary positions with the Nebraska Department of Revenue and the Nebraska Department of Roads.

She currently is working full-time at Super Saver, enjoying a newly purchased car, and is planning to continue her education in 2016.



TROY BALDERSTON

A year after a spinal cord injury in 2010, Troy came to Nebraska VR to get back to work and do what he loves.

One of Troy's passions is caring for animals. Nebraska VR assessed his interests, skills, and abilities. His counselor coordinated with Nebraska AgrAbility and the Assistive Technology Partnership to provide accommodations for essential work tasks, such as a lift and hand controls for driving.

Troy is successfully employed as a herdsman in Norton, KS not far from his Beaver City, NE home. He loves the opportunity to enjoy a better quality of life and wants people to know about the services available from Nebraska VR. He feels that there are people that need to know they can do more than what they think they can do.

## OFFICE LOCATIONS

### Columbus serves counties:

Butler, Colfax, Nance, Platte and Polk  
3100 23rd Street, Ste. 5, Columbus, NE 68601  
(402) 562-8065 V/TTY, (877) 505-0866 V/TTY  
VR.InfoColumbus@nebraska.gov

### Fremont serves counties:

Dodge  
827 North D St , Fremont, NE 68025  
(402) 727-2900 V, (888) 585-5439 V  
VR.InfoFremont@nebraska.gov

### Grand Island serves counties:

Adams, Clay, Fillmore, Greeley, Hall, Hamilton,  
Howard, Merrick, Nuckolls, Thayer, Webster, York  
203 E Stolley Park Rd, Ste. B  
Grand Island, NE 68801  
(308) 385-6200 V/TTY, (800) 862-3382 V/TTY  
VR.InfoGrandIsland@nebraska.gov

### Kearney serves counties:

Blaine, Buffalo, Custer, Franklin, Furnas, Garfield,  
Harlan, Kearney, Loup, Phelps, Sherman, Valley  
315 W 60th Street, Ste 400, Kearney, NE 68845  
(308) 865-5343 V/TTY, (800) 262-3382 V/TTY  
VR.InfoKearney@nebraska.gov

### Lincoln serves counties:

Gage, Jefferson, Johnson, Lancaster, Nemaha, Otoe,  
Pawnee, Richardson, Saline, Saunders, Seward  
3901 N 27th Street, Ste 6, Lincoln, NE 68521  
(402) 471-3231 V/TTY  
(800) 472-3382 V/TTY  
VR.InfoLincoln@nebraska.gov

### Norfolk serves counties:

Antelope, Boone, Boyd, Brown, Burt, Cedar, Cuming,  
Dixon, Holt, Keya Paha, Knox, Madison, Pierce, Rock,  
Stanton, Wayne, Wheeler  
1212 Benjamin Avenue, Norfolk, NE 68701  
(402) 370-3200 V/TTY, (800) 442-3382 V/TTY  
VR.InfoNorfolk@nebraska.gov

### North Platte serves counties:

Arthur, Chase, Cherry, Dawson, Dundy,  
Frontier, Gosper, Grant, Hayes, Hitchcock, Hooker, Keith,  
Lincoln, Logan, McPherson, Perkins, Red Willow, Thomas  
200 South Silber, Bldg. #2, North Platte, NE 69101  
(308) 535-8100 V/TTY, (800) 272-3382 V/TTY  
VR.InfoNorthPlatte@nebraska.gov

### Omaha-Downtown serves counties:

Cass, Douglas, Sarpy, Washington  
1313 Farnam on the Mall, Omaha, NE 68102  
(402) 595-2100 V, (402) 595-2107 TTY  
(800) 554-3382  
VR.InfoOmahaDowntown@nebraska.gov

### Omaha-West serves counties:

Douglas  
12011 Q Street, Omaha, NE 68137  
(402) 595-1212 V/TTY, (877) 240-4445 V/TTY  
VR.InfoOmahaWest@nebraska.gov

### Scottsbluff serves counties:

Banner, Box Butte, Cheyenne, Dawes, Deuel, Garden,  
Kimball, Morrill, Scotts Bluff, Sheridan, Sioux  
505A Broadway, Ste 500, Scottsbluff, NE 69361  
(308) 632-1321 V/TTY, (800) 292-3382 V/TTY  
VR.InfoScottsbluff@nebraska.gov

### South Sioux City serves counties:

Dakota, Thurston  
901 West 21st Street, Ste 1,  
South Sioux City, NE 68776  
(402) 494-2265 V/TTY, (877) 659-7899 V/TTY  
VR.InfoSouthSiouxCity@nebraska.gov

### State Office (located in Lincoln):

301 Centennial Mall South, PO Box 94987,  
Lincoln, NE 68509-4987  
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VR.InfoStateOffice@nebraska.gov



## State Rehabilitation Council

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